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Manhattan U.S. Attorney And FBI Acting Assistant Director-In-Charge Announce Return Of Stolen Roy Lichtenstein Painting To Its Rightful Owner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 16, 2012

Painting Valued at \$4 Million Was Missing for 42 Years

Preet Bharara, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Mary E. Galligan, the Acting Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced today the return of the Roy Lichtenstein painting, "Electric Cord," which had been missing for 42 years, to Barbara Bertozzi Castelli, the widow of American art dealer Leo Castelli ("Castelli").

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "More than four decades after it disappeared, we are delighted to have played a role in securing the return of this painting by the internationally renowned artist, Roy Lichtenstein, to its rightful owner. Returning stolen art and artifacts is an important mission of this Office, and it is always gratifying when we are successful."

FBI Acting Assistant Director-in-Charge Galligan said: "The return of Roy Lichtenstein's 'Electric Cord' to its rightful owner serves the interests of justice. The FBI is pleased to have had a role in making that happen."

According to the Stipulation filed in Manhattan federal court and documents filed in Manhattan Supreme Court in related litigation:

The "Electric Cord" was painted in 1961 by Roy Lichtenstein, an esteemed American painter, and is now valued at approximately \$4,000,000. Castelli, an American art dealer, acquired the painting in the 1960s, and displayed it at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York City. In January 1970, Castelli sent the "Electric Cord" to Daniel Goldreyer ("Goldreyer"), an art restorer, for cleaning. After Goldreyer received the painting, it mysteriously disappeared.

In December 2006, the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to Roy Lichtenstein's art and creative legacy, published an image of the "Electric Cord" on the front of its holiday greeting card, and asked the art community for help in finding the painting. In July 2012, the painting resurfaced at the Hayes Storage Facility, a warehouse in New York. Thereafter, the FBI discovered that the Hayes Storage Facility had received the "Electric Cord" from the Quinta Galeria art gallery in Bogotá, Colombia, which had received it on consignment from Goldreyer's widow, Sally Goldreyer, a/k/a "Sally Model."

According to Sally Goldreyer, when her husband died in 2009, she and others began to clean out the lockers of his company's employees, including an employee named Ben Dolinsky ("Dolinsky"). She contends that the contents of Dolinsky's locker were boxed and given away to a "friend," who, three years later, asked her to sell the "Electric Cord" for him. She claims that she then offered to sell the "Electric Cord" to the Quinta Galeria art gallery, but refunded the gallery's deposit when she found a missing notice for the painting posted on the Internet.

On October 9, 2012, Sally Goldreyer and the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York entered into a stipulation regarding the "Electric Cord," pursuant to which Sally Goldreyer relinquished all right, title, and interest in the painting and agreed that it should be returned to Barbara Bertozzi Castelli, its rightful owner. The stipulation was so ordered by the United States District Court on October 10, 2012. The "Electric Cord" was returned to Barbara Bertozzi Castelli earlier today at a ceremony held at the United States Attorney's Office in Manhattan.

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Mr. Bharara praised the investigative work of the FBI in this matter, and its ongoing efforts to find and repatriate stolen property. He also thanked the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations for its assistance in this case.

This matter is being handled by the Office's Asset Forfeiture Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah E. Paul is in charge of the case.

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